

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims in above-identified patent application as detailed in the Claims Listing appended hereto.



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What is claimed is:

1. (currently amended) A reagent for use in immunoassays, comprising:
a plurality of particles; particles, each of said particles comprising a surface having been activated by a carbodiimide;
a binding agent selected from the group consisting of antigens and antibodies linked to the surface carbodiimide through a covalent bond; and
a tertiary amine compound of the formula $\text{N}(\text{R}^1-\text{X})(\text{R}^2-\text{Y})(\text{R}^3-\text{Z})$ H ; wherein R^1 , R^2 , and R^3 are independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl and alkyl ether; and X , Y , and Z are independently selected from the group consisting of $-\text{OH}$, $-\text{O}-\text{R}^4$, $-\text{S}-\text{R}^4$, $-\text{C}(=\text{O})-\text{OH}$, $-\text{C}(=\text{O})-\text{OR}^4$, or and $-\text{C}(=\text{O})-\text{NHR}^4$, wherein R^4 is alkyl.
2. (original) The reagent of claim 1, wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 are independently alkyl groups comprising from 1 to 5 carbon atoms.
3. (original) The reagent of claim 1, wherein X , Y , and Z are independently selected from the group consisting of $-\text{OH}$ and $-\text{O}-\text{R}^4$.
4. (original) The reagent of claim 1, wherein R^1 , R^2 , and R^3 are independently alkyl groups comprising from 1 to 5 carbon atoms; and X , Y , and Z are $-\text{OH}$.
5. (original) The reagent of claim 1, wherein the tertiary amine compound is triethanolamine.
6. (canceled)
7. (canceled)
8. (canceled)
9. (canceled)

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10. (original) The reagent of claim 1, wherein the particles further comprise the reaction product of a succinimide ester and a primary amine compound on the surface.
11. (original) The reagent of claim 10, wherein the primary amine compound is selected from the group consisting of glycine ethyl ester; 2-(aminoethoxy)ethanol; 2,2'-(ethylenedioxy)bisethylamine; and 4,7,10-trioxa-1,3-tridecanediamine.
12. (original) The reagent of claim 1, wherein the plurality of particles and the tertiary amine compound are present in a single liquid mixture.
13. (currently amended) A reagent for use in immunoassays, comprising:
a plurality of particles; particles, each of said particles comprising a surface having been activated by a carbodiimide;
a binding agent selected from the group consisting of antigens and antibodies linked to the surface carbodiimide through a covalent bond; and
a tertiary amine compound of the formula (II)-N(R¹-OH)(R²-OH)(R³-OH) (II); wherein R¹, R², and R³ are independently alkyl groups comprising from 1 to 5 carbon atoms; wherein the reagent forms an assay mixture when mixed with a sample, such that the tertiary amine compound is present in the assay mixture in a concentration of 50 mM or less.
14. (original) The reagent of claim 13, wherein the tertiary amine compound is triethanolamine.
15. (original) The reagent of claim 13, wherein the particles further comprise the reaction product of a succinimide ester and a primary amine compound on the surface; wherein the primary amine is selected from the group consisting of glycine ethyl ester; 2-(aminoethoxy)ethanol; 2,2'-(ethylenedioxy)bisethylamine; and 4,7,10-trioxa-1,3-tridecanediamine.

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16. (original) The reagent of claim 13, wherein the plurality of particles and the tertiary amine compound are present in a single liquid mixture.
17. (currently amended) An assay method for determining an analyte, comprising:
combining a sample suspected of containing said analyte with the reagent of claim 1,
~~wherein the reagent comprising the antibody of said analyte, and the reagent capable of forming binding agent is specific for the analyte and forms a detectable complex with said analyte; and~~
determining the presence or amount of said detectable complex as a measure of said analyte in said sample.
18. (currently amended) An assay method for determining an analyte, comprising:
combining a sample suspected of containing said analyte with the reagent of claim 4,
~~wherein the reagent comprising the antibody of said analyte, and the reagent capable of forming binding agent is specific for the analyte and forms a detectable complex with said analyte; and~~
determining the presence or amount of said detectable complex as a measure of said analyte in said sample.
19. (canceled)
20. (currently amended) An assay method for determining an analyte, comprising:
combining a sample suspected of containing said analyte with the reagent of claim 13,
~~wherein the reagent comprising the antibody of said analyte, and the reagent capable of forming binding agent is specific for the analyte and forms a detectable complex with said analyte; and~~
determining the presence or amount of said detectable complex as a measure of said analyte in said sample.

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21. (original) A test kit, comprising the reagent of claim 1.
22. (original) A test kit, comprising the reagent of claim 4.
23. (canceled)
24. (original) A test kit, comprising the reagent of claim 13.
25. (canceled)
26. (canceled)
27. (canceled)
28. (canceled)